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conjointly carried on by Joseph Grinnell, Walter P. Taylor, and Tracy I. Storer, staff-members of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, assisted by several graduate students from the natural science departments of the University of California and of Stanford University. These assistants included Charles L. Camp, Charles D. Holliger and Gordon F. Ferris. In addition, Mr. Joseph Dixon, who has recently joined the staff of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, spent some weeks in the field during the late fall. The expenses of the work are being defrayed in major part from private sources, most notably through special gift from Miss Annie M. Alexander. This benefactor is thus to be credited with actuating much of the natural history fieldwork now going on in California.

The Editor was recently privileged to look over the private collections of Mr. Donald R. Dickey of Pasadena and was astonished at their extent and especially the great care displayed in their preparation and housing. These collections consisted not only of study-skins of birds and mammals, but also of large series of high-class photographs, betokening great patience and ingenuity in field-work. Truly excellent *autochrome* pictures of *living* birds marked the latest advance in the art of photography. Numbers of reels of movies, taken of both birds and mammals, showed the highest degree of perfection in this difficult field. Yet, withal, Mr. Dickey's modesty has thus far retarded publication of most of his work. We have reason to believe, however, that before long through certain channels bird students will come to know of Mr. Dickey's work to their distinct benefit and enjoyment.

In a recent paper published in the *Ottawa Naturalist* (vol. XXIX, 1915, pp. 14-18, 21-28), Mr. P. A. Taverner sets forth some very sound principles of ornithological practice. His title, "Suggestions for ornithological work in Canada", would appear to indicate restriction in scope; but, in fact, the ideas are in large measure applicable in any country. Two or three paragraphs may be quoted here as samples of the sane things said.

"There is also a sentiment against the scientist collecting 'rare birds' on the supposition that if these were allowed to breed they would become common. There are practically no birds, but game, raptorial and plumage forms, that suffer systematic persecution. The number of small or rare birds that are killed by human agencies, except for profit or food, is on the average negligible. Are there a dozen people in Canada, seeking or hunting for Cory's Least Bittern? How many would know one if they saw it? The species has had hundreds of generations in which to become common; if they are rare now it is due to the action of still operating natural causes. The rari-

ty of a creature not especially or generally hunted for profit is an indication that it is not adapted to conditions and is nearing extinction through natural causes. Rarity obviously just precedes extinction."

"It must be borne in mind that our bird population is limited by natural conditions. In most cases this limit was reached long ago, and no more birds can inhabit North America than can find support during the season of least food supply. In a normal or stationary population, the death rate must equal the birth rate or else the population ceases to be stationary. The breeding season increases the population enormously and one way or another this increase must be, and is, reduced to the smaller supporting power of the land through winter.

"It is evident that this allows of a considerable margin of reduction and shows that even quite considerable numbers can be destroyed without interfering with the ultimate numbers of the population and that the comparatively few individuals taken by collectors cannot have an appreciable effect upon their number."

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

WILD BIRD GUESTS | how to entertain them | with chapters on the destruction of birds | their economic and aesthetic values | suggestions for dealing with their | enemies, and on the organiza- | tion and management of | bird clubs | By ERNEST HAROLD BAYNES | with 50 photogravure illustrations | from photographs | New York | E. P. Dutton & Company | 1915 | . Pp. xviii+326, unnumbered plates as above. (\$2.00.)

The author and publishers are to be congratulated on the production of this remarkable book. The reader at once receives an impression of high quality, to which a number of factors are contributory. Among these is the artistic make-up of the book. The typography could hardly be improved upon, and the photogravures, many of which are of living birds or mammals, are excellent. The personality of the author himself is without doubt a large element of attraction. Especially worthy of remark are his modesty, and his cordial appreciation of the work of others in behalf of conservation.

Indicative of his quality of appreciation of the contributions of other workers are the following quotations (pp. 310, 311): "The author . . . proffers his thanks . . . to none more gratefully than to those scientific men in Washington and elsewhere, upon whose patient, accurate, but often unappreciated work, some of the strongest pleas for bird conservation are based." "When an unbiased history of American wild bird conservation is written, there will be few names which stand out with greater prominence than that of Edward Howe Forbush, who never pauses in his work to tell the world that it is he who is doing it."

In their own neighborhood Mr. and Mrs. Baynes have had wonderful success in making the intimate personal acquaintance of many birds. A very full discussion of such problems as those concerning methods of attracting birds, feeding birds in winter, devices which have been found useful, nest boxes, and the best shrubs and plants for attracting birds, is one of the chief contributions of the book.

The much argued questions as to the relations of the farmer, the sportsman, the foreigner, and the scientific collector to the preservation of birds are discussed in a refreshingly impersonal way. Mr. Baynes has avoided sweeping statements, and it must be admitted that his words have a correspondingly convincing quality.

Worthy of note is his attitude toward the predatory fur-bearing mammals and other bird enemies, so often condemned unconditionally by bird enthusiasts. Evidence for as well as against them is carefully entered, and in concluding the chapter treating of destruction of birds by natural enemies, he says (p. 37): "Yet it is a fact that all the storms that sweep the earth and all the natural enemies, including savage people, would seldom make any lasting impression on the normal bird population, if it were not for civilized man and his works." He makes clear the fact that the market demand for bird plumage or for the flesh of wild birds has been of foremost importance as a factor in the decrease of many species and the extermination of others.

It is of decided interest that the author, although not a collector himself, has not allowed his devotion to the birds to blind him to the relation of the scientist to conservation. On page 267 he says: "As for scientific collectors, the writer believes that they should be allowed to go about their work unhampered by petty restrictions. Compared with other gunners they shoot few birds and these are generally made good use of. The complaint that scientific men do not do their share in the work of wild life conservation, is generally unfair. It is usually the cry of some conservationist who wishes he were scientific but is not, who wishes to attract attention to his own work by belittling that of others, or who does not appreciate the fact that the work he himself is doing is based largely on the work of the scientist."

As a step toward the solution of the cat problem, admittedly one of the most difficult before bird lovers, a tax of one dollar on each male cat and five dollars on each female cat is recommended.

The English Sparrow, or European Sparrow as Mr. Baynes calls it, apparently has no terrors for the author. The birds have been banished completely from his home town, Meriden, New Hampshire. Trapping is asserted to be the safest method of elimination, poisoning the most effective. As to the possibility of eradicating the English Sparrow he says (pp. 245, 246): "Almost any town or city can be cleared of European Sparrows and kept clear of them, if just a few men of resource and resolution will undertake the work. In almost any town there are a certain number of men who have made a great success in business, and I know and they know that if the sparrows had stood between any one of them and the success he has made, there would not be a single sparrow in that town."

Mr. Baynes gives ample space and adequate treatment to the economic argument for bird protection, but wisely realizes that without feelings and passion as well as economics and intellect behind it the movement for conservation will not get as far as it ought to. The following is from his discussion of the aesthetic and moral reasons for protecting the birds (p. 116): "No woods are dreary if the jays or crows are calling; no field but is full of joy if the bobolinks are sprinkling it with their song; and he is not quite human whose heart does not beat faster when at night and far above him he hears the cry of the wild gander as he leads his flying squadrons northward, homeward, through the pathways of the skies."

The note of Mr. Bayne's argument, throughout, is an optimistic, a constructive one. His is not a code of *don't's*, but rather a compellingly persuasive program of *do's*. Realizing the fundamental importance in our complicated civilization of organization as an aid to individual effort he places much emphasis upon the desirability of the formation of bird clubs.

After reading the book one is not surprised to learn that a new edition has had to be prepared already.—WALTER P. TAYLOR.

## MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

### NORTHERN DIVISION

OCTOBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, Thursday evening, October 28, 1915, at 8 P. M. In absence of both the President and Vice-President, Dr. H. C. Bryant assumed